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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2962
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY PRIORITY
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 2010
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 2131
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0673
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1408
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 1766
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2187
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4618
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
RHMFISS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1271
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 000474

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR S. HILL
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/02/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: VIOLENCE BEATING DOWN VOTER OPTIMISM

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i. Glenn Warren for reasons 1.4 (b, d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: During a visit to Mashonaland East, scene of post-election violence, Embassy officers interviewed religious leaders, doctors, and one victim of the post-election violence. While reluctant to speak freely, these Zimbabweans expressed dismay and frustration at the growing violence in the area, which they said was being instigated by the ZANU-PF chairman who was voted out of office on March 29. In this area, violence is largely being carried out by youths who are known in the community. MDC candidate Morgan Tsvangirai visited the area capital, Murewa, on May 28 for the funeral of the murdered regional MDC treasurer for Mashonaland East, Shepherd Jani. Nuns in Murewa intimated that turnout at the funeral and Tsvangirai's rally was low, as people now fear open association with the MDC. END SUMMARY.

Violence and ZANU-PF meetings in Murewa West

12. (SBU) On May 29, eight Embassy staff, one local NGO worker, and a member of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) visited the city of Murewa and the rural village of Musami in Mashonaland East, approximately 60 miles east of Harare, to survey the recent violence in the area. While the region was previously a ZANU-PF stronghold, the MDC won by a wide margin in the March 29 presidential and parliamentary elections.

13. (C) At St. Paul's Mission, a Jesuit institution in the village of Musami that includes schools and a hospital, priest Felix Majichi expressed concern with the escalating violence since the announcement of the election results on May 2. Father Majichi related stories of several incidents of violence, all involving attacks against people at their homes during the night. In one incident, a village chief's home was attacked by brick-throwing youths. One of the bricks injured his 13-year-old son. The chief fought back; he met his attackers with a spear, injuring one in the leg.

The attackers left his home and did not return.

¶4. (C) In addition to known incidents of violence, residents have been forced or coerced to attend pro-ZANU-PF rallies. On approximately May 15, the local ZANU-PF chairman held a meeting, against the objections of the local and national church structures and the governor, on St. Paul's grounds. At the meeting, the chairman, who had lost the March 29 election for Counselor to his ex-wife, threatened that if "it happened again" they would be beaten up. Hospital staff at St. Paul's and clergy in Murewa concurred that those who had not attended such meetings had been threatened that if they did not come, they "will be dealt with later."

¶5. (C) Father Majichi also reported that nearby residents had approached St. Paul's Mission seeking food. Harvest has just ended, and there is still not enough food. Driving through the region, we noted many fields that were not planted to their full capacity and observed few livestock.

Hospital ill-equipped if violence escalates

¶6. (C) Doctors at the Mission hospital at St. Paul's reported seeing 10 victims of political violence, all since the May 2 announcement of election results. They opined that most wounds they have seen were 'not serious' and mostly intended to intimidate and frighten. The doctors believed those with the more serious injuries travel to Harare

HARARE 00000474 002 OF 003

directly for care. The worst case at St. Paul's involved a man who was beaten with a hot iron rod on his back. The doctors concurred with Father Majichi and estimated that about 30 local youths, who are known in the community - and who can usually be found near Murewa Town Hall - were primarily responsible for the attacks. They told us that the hospital, serving a population of about 30,000 residents in the surrounding area, was struggling to maintain medical supplies and equipment.

¶7. (C) At the hospital, we met with 37-year-old Sarah who was beaten, along with her husband, by a group of about 20 people who came to their home late at night on May 23. Both are known MDC supporters. She was visibly in pain as she tried to walk, and she had not received pain medication due to a shortage at the hospital. Her husband, whose leg may be broken, could not be properly diagnosed because the hospital's x-ray machine is broken and needs imported parts to function. She and her neighbors knew about half of her attackers. MDC and local NGOs plan to bring the couple to Harare for additional treatment.

Murewa mourns MDC leader in silence

¶8. (U) The day before our arrival, MDC Presidential candidate Morgan Tsvangirai visited the town of Murewa and presided over the funeral of Shepherd Jani. Jani was well-known in the community. His family owns a general store in the heart of town, and he was Treasurer for the MDC in Mashonaland East. According to press reports and Embassy contacts, at about noon on Thursday May 22, Jani was abducted from the sidewalk near his family's store and pushed into a truck. He had called an Embassy contact that morning to request assistance, as he had had an argument with a local military official the day before. Help did not arrive in time, however. Jani's body was found two days later, brutally murdered. The Jani funeral was the second Tsvangirai has attended since his return to Zimbabwe on May 18.

Nuns and Priests Intimidated

19. (C) In Murewa, Embassy staff visited the Murewa Catholic Mission and met briefly with the Assistant Priest and four nuns. They appeared anxious throughout the brief visit, glancing across the street to the adjacent field where ZANU-PF holds meetings. They described the atmosphere in town as "unhealthy" and said they had been asked why they weren't attending ZANU-PF meetings. The nuns also reported that turnout at Morgan Tsvangirai's rally and at Shepherd Jani's funeral the day before had been very poor, in contrast with Tsvangirai's well-attended rally before the March 29 election.

COMMENT

10. (C) Mashonaland East, and Murewa in particular, is one of many traditional ZANU-PF areas that dramatically voted out ZANU-PF in the March 29 elections in favor of the MDC. While the voters have spoken, ZANU-PF leadership remains unwilling to graciously - or ungraciously - accept defeat. ZANU-PF leaders in Murewa retain significant control and ability to instill fear in local residents. The tense atmosphere on the streets and the nuns' hesitance to meet with American officials demonstrate the degree to which this fear has permeated local society. As MDC leaders themselves are

HARARE 00000474 003 OF 003

targeted by the violence, it is unclear how the MDC leadership will protect themselves and their voters from these attacks. The larger question is whether the people of Murewa and towns like it will come out and vote again for Morgan Tsvangirai on June 27, or if the campaign of intimidation will work at the ballot box. Regardless of the election outcome, these instances of community-based violence will have chilling effects for years to come and may spark additional violence as victims seek retribution. END COMMENT.

Warren